



# THE HOOSIER VETERAN

ISSUE 7 • JULY 2021

[in.gov/dva](https://in.gov/dva)



Independence Day is July 4  
Korean War Veterans Armistice Day is  
July 27

## WELCOME!

BY JOE DEVITO

Happy Independence Day! This month we celebrate our freedom with July 4 community festivals, fireworks and events across Indiana. Also, we remember the Korean War Armistice that took place July 27, 1953. With the many exciting events and gatherings, we urge our Indiana Veteran community to stay safe and thankful to our veterans and service members whose sacrifice made our independence possible all those years ago. The team at the IDVA remains committed to making Indiana the best place for all Indiana Veterans to Live, Work and Thrive! We welcome contributions and feedback to [outreach@dva.in.gov](mailto:outreach@dva.in.gov).

THE HOOSIER VETERAN  
NEWSLETTER

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# A LOVE LETTER TO WWII

BY KARA KAVENSKY

While stationed at Camp Atterbury, preparing to be shipped overseas, Cpl. James McDowell was placed into the U.S. Army Medical Corps. Thanks to his typing skills (he took six semesters of typing at Lincoln High School, in Neb.), McDowell became the triage typist admitting injured soldiers into the hospital. He was part of the 231st Medical Corps, which was placed in the middle of the busiest U.S. Army Air Corps unit of WW II: the 8th.

Recalling his time spent at Camp Atterbury, McDowell shared his first encounter with Col. Lynwood Gable, a decorated surgeon from the Great War (WW I). Gable climbed out of a car and, upon seeing the unit he was to command, declared, "What did I get myself into?! Bring me a Coke! In fact, bring me two!" McDowell wasn't sure of the significance of the cola request, but the colonel told his unit that they would be turned into "the best damned medical unit in the Army." And based on the history books, it sounds like it was a mission accomplished.



Gable was a music lover, and he held auditions for a band. McDowell was chosen as the lead singer in what became known as the Gable Gators. He is a natural performer and had gained much of his experience as a schoolkid. He loved choir and sang whenever he had the chance.

On a trip to Indianapolis to buy sheet music, McDowell met the love of his life. Peggy Million worked at the Pearson record shop in downtown Indianapolis. It was love at first sight. The couple developed a relationship over the next several months before McDowell shipped off to England, proposing marriage to her before he departed. Every day he wrote love letters to his "one in a million." Peggy wrote to him as well.

After spending their first six months at Red Grave Park, the 231st Medical Unit was placed in Norwich. The hospital served the notorious 8th, who were the flyboys bombing German positions across the English Channel. Each day a squadron of bombers would leave and all prayed they would return. McDowell said the casualties were high and they would see the bombers returning with holes in the planes, hoping they would land safely.



German “buzz” bombs were the main threat to the base. McDowell recalls hearing them. If the buzzing stopped, it was time to head for shelter. The fog presented another challenge. Many days they could not see their hands in front of their faces. McDowell and his unit strung stakes with string to help guide them from their barracks to the hospital ward.

On Friday and Saturday evenings, when the men weren’t working in the hospital, the Gable Gators entertained the 8th U.S. Army Air Corps at their base in England. The band gained popularity, even having some hits of their own over the airwaves. The band performed at numerous bases around England, entertaining not only the Americans but the English troops as well.



A highlight of McDowell’s 2.5 years stationed overseas occurred on August 18, 1944, the evening he met Glenn Miller. McDowell was actually a patient in his own hospital that day with a toothache on the left side of his mouth. A band member informed McDowell that not only were they requested to perform at the officers’ club that night in Attlebridge, but prior to their performance, Maj. Glenn Miller would be giving a concert in a bomber hangar on the same base. Determined to attend the performance, as well as sing with the Gable Gators, McDowell iced his swollen jaw all afternoon to prepare. McDowell succeeded not only in seeing Miller but also in being introduced to Miller and having a photograph taken with him in the men’s latrine.

This encounter wasn’t unique to McDowell. 1st Lt. John Woolnough of the 8th Air Corps also had a photograph taken in the latrine that night with Miller. After the war Woolnough would author six books about his experiences with the 8th Air Corps. Woolnough mentions McDowell’s encounter with Miller in one of these books, a pleasant surprise for McDowell when he read the book.



McDowell became best friends with one of his fellow Gators, accordion player Lenny Kratoska. The two of them had the idea to start a radio station on base. Gable thought it was a splendid idea and pledged funding. The men went to London to buy the equipment, which included a huge transmitter. The guys figured out how to wire the hospital wards (barracks) with speakers on either end replete with volume controls. The guys took turns on their off-hours to play records for the healing soldiers in their hospital. A true morale booster, the radio station was extremely well received, and the patients made requests and dedications for the disc jockeys.

Returning from England aboard the U.S.S. Enterprise, McDowell says that one of the most amazing moments of his life was standing on deck with the other soldiers in their dress uniforms saluting Lady Liberty as they cruised into port.

McDowell was discharged through Camp Atterbury, which allowed a convenient reunion with his fiancé, Peggy. Peggy, who graduated from Butler University's Arthur Jordan Conservatory of Music, accompanied McDowell to Chicago. McDowell attended the Columbia School of Broadcasting, along with his buddy Kratoska. Kratoska became the music director for WBBM in Chicago, holding the post for 40 years. After graduating, McDowell and Peggy eventually moved to Indianapolis to settle down.

McDowell became known as Jimmy Mack (the nickname came from Kratoska, and Jimmy returned the favor, giving him his nickname of Lenny Kaye) and enjoyed a long career in broadcasting in Indianapolis. Jimmy and Peggy bought a home across the street from where Peggy grew up in Broad Ripple near the White River Yacht Club.

The McDowells' extensive list of credentials and accomplishments defies comprehension. Their careers revolved around entertainment. Both developed radio shows, performed and raised three children. Among other things, Jimmy had a television show called "Teen Twirl" on WISH-TV and was a local radio personality. Peggy was a talent agent, and both performed with Footlite Musicals. Peggy and Jim were quite the pair. Peggy passed away in 2009, just missing her husband's induction into the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers' Hall of Fame. An Indiana Broadcast Pioneer herself, her last gift to Jimmy was the Hall of Fame induction she submitted on his behalf.

Now 91, Jimmy Mack still performs occasionally. I've had the pleasure of seeing him perform a few times, and he does it flawlessly. Seeing him onstage, still able to wear his uniform from WW II, it is easy to picture the boy of 20, singing for the airmen, "I'll be seeing you, in all the old, familiar places..."





*July/Aug*  
VETERAN COMMUNITY EVENTS



# *Indiana* **FIREWORKS**

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LIST**

## **Remembering the Korean War at Fort Harrison State Park**

We will have temporary display of uniforms and equipment used by the opposing forces during the Korean War. There is no charge for this display however, normal State Park gate fees do apply.



10 a.m. to 4 p.m. July 10 & 11

6000 North Post Road Indianapolis, IN 46216

Facebook page HERE: <https://m.facebook.com/events/2627976100833320>



## **The Beaches of Normandy Paintball Event**

One of the most important & infamous battles of World War 2, The Beaches of Normandy would start the momentum that would decide the fate of the European theater. Will you follow in the footsteps of history and lead the Allies to victory? Or will you march against history and lend your skills to the Axis? The choice is yours. Don't miss out on this player-favorite paintball scenario event, The Beaches of Normandy.

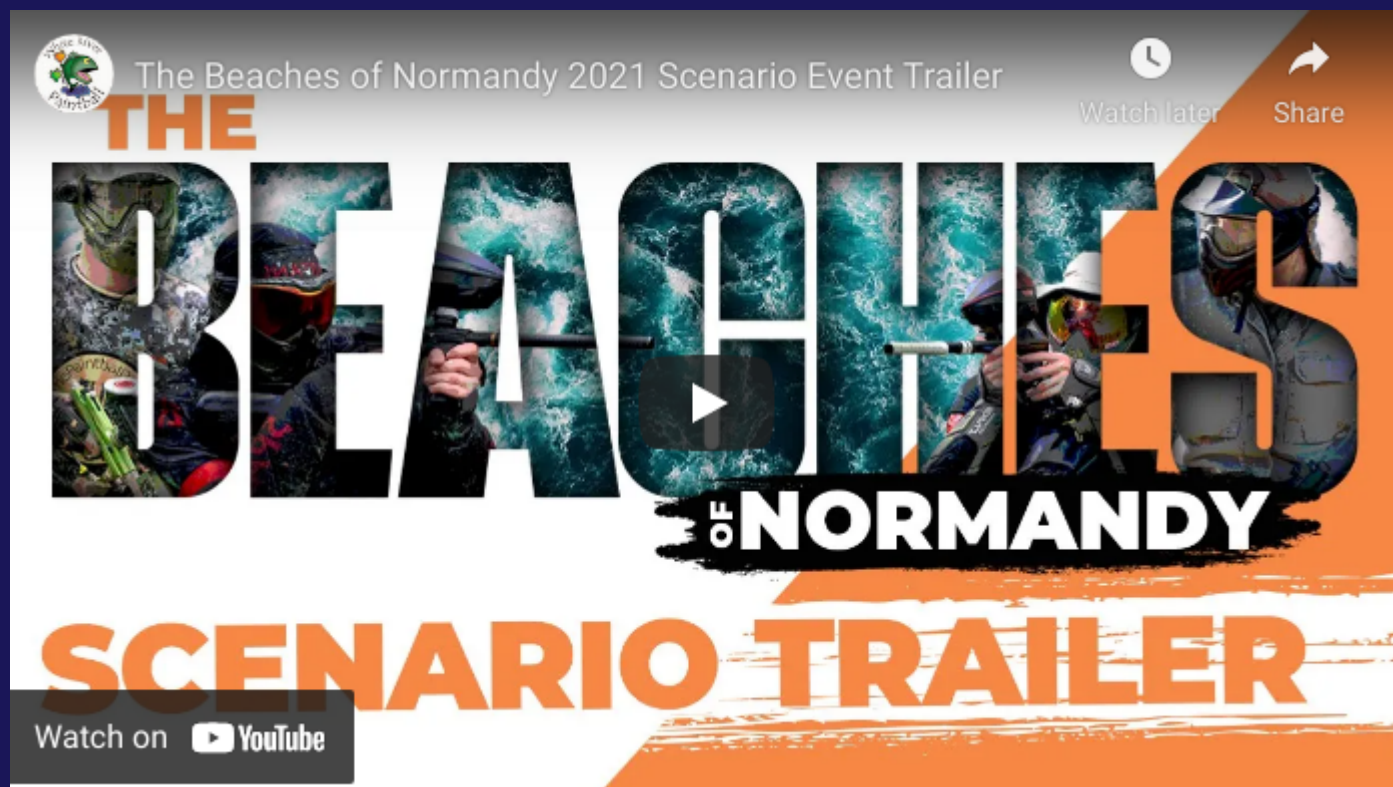
Call 317-489-3732 to register today!

July 16 to 18

White River Paintball, 5211 South New Columbus Road, Anderson, IN 46013

**Visit the event website HERE.**

# The Beaches of Normandy Scenario Trailer



## *Honoring Women Veterans Conference*

A free event for all women veterans. Information, food (provided by Mission BBQ), Lisa Kirk speaking, some spa services, win prizes and a great time. Also, a chance to speak to other women who have walked the walk and can talk the talk! This is an event for women only...no children...Thank you! For more information please contact Commander Barbara Kortz-Cole (812) 550-0552.

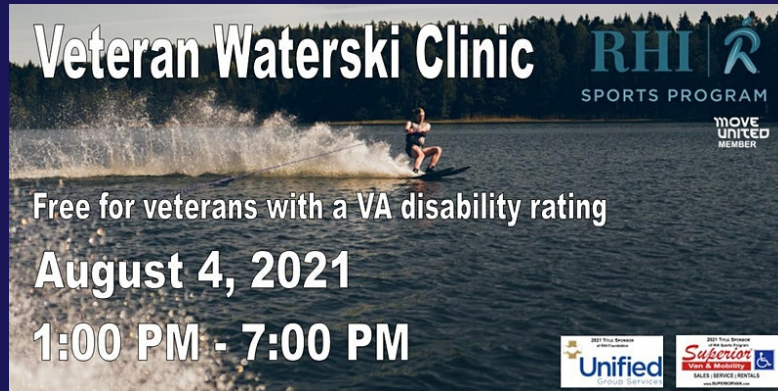
8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (CDT) July 17  
3300 East Division Street Evansville, IN 47715  
[Register for the event HERE.](#)



7th Annual Race for the Warrior 5K/10K Run, Walk, Ruck  
July 24  
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
6255 International Blvd, Suite 209, Fort Wayne, IN 46809  
[Register Here!](#)



# Veteran Water-Skiing Clinic



RHI Sports is hosting a water ski clinic for veterans with a service connected disability who have the ability to water ski without adaptive equipment. They will be taking out 3 to 4 veterans at a time.

White River – Broad Ripple Boat Ramp  
1550 Broad Ripple Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46220  
1:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. August 4

\*LIMITED SPOTS\*, for additional information please visit the event site  
[Click Here for event page](#)



YOU CAN'T USE UP  
CREATIVITY  
THE MORE YOU USE,  
THE MORE YOU HAVE

Writing in Peace, a program of the Kurt Vonnegut Museum & Library in partnership with Turkey Run State Park, is a creative writing workshop for veterans. This is a monthly workshop. Sign up by emailing to [info@vonnegutlibrary.org](mailto:info@vonnegutlibrary.org) indicating which dates you would like to attend. Visit the [Vonnegut Library](#) website for more information.

MAYA ANGELOU





## Freedom Celebrations across Indiana!

### **Thunder Over Patoka**

Enjoy a fireworks display at Patoka Lake Beach 9:30 to 10:30 p.m. July 3 presented by Patoka Lake Area Yearround (PLAY). Fireworks will start at approximately 10 p.m. Bring your family and friends, lawn chairs, blankets, refreshments, and bug spray. Already camping at Patoka this weekend? Then there is no need to drive down to the beach. Just go to section C of the Modern Campground for your own viewing area of the fireworks display. The entrance fee of \$7 per vehicle for Indiana residents (\$9 out of state) is required for the Newton Stewart State Recreation Area, Patoka Reservoir, located north of Wickliffe Indiana, Highway 164. Fireworks will be viewable from multiple areas around the lake. For more information regarding this program or other interpretive events, call the Nature Center at 812-685-2447.

### **Marion 4th of July Fireworks**

Join us for an evening of fireworks at Matter Park on River Drive in Marion! Free fun, free admission. Inflatables for the kids to enjoy. Vendors with delicious food options for you to purchase. Live music includes Cook & Belle from 8 to 10 p.m. Fireworks begin at dusk – around 10 p.m.

### **4th of July Fireworks Extravaganza in Santa Claus, IN**

Celebrate America's birthday at the nation's only theme park with a 4th of July section! Fireworks begin on both nights at park closing, weather permitting. As always, all park guests enjoy two parks for one price, plus free unlimited soft drinks, free sunscreen, and free parking! Pick Your Price Tickets available at [HolidayWorld.com/Tickets](https://HolidayWorld.com/Tickets). Holiday World & Splashin' Safari is located at 452 E. Christmas Blvd. Santa Claus, Indiana 47579. Time: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. July 3 & 4. Contact: Josh Moore [fun@holidayworld.com](mailto:fun@holidayworld.com) or Phone: (812) 937-4401.

### **Summer Concert Series: 4th of July & Firework Watch Party**

Downtown Olly's has one of the best views of the Indianapolis Independence Day firework displays. Join the party ahead of time with Sean Baker joined by a full band! We will also have a full bar, fun outdoor games, and all your 4th of July fun! Our new Backyard patio is the perfect place to celebrate independence gained in 1776. The band kicks off at 8 p.m. but this backyard party starts off at 6 p.m.! See you there! Space is limited so get your party pass ASAP! Downtown Olly's is located at 822 N. Illinois St., Indianapolis. This event is 6 to 10 p.m. July 4. Entrance fee \$5.

### **Cedar Lake Summerfest**

Each year, more than 20,000 people attend the Cedar Lake Summerfest on the shore of the 800 acre lake. There is live entertainment every day, food, fireworks, amusement rides, car shows, beer garden and more! Fireworks are 9:30 p.m. July 2 & 3 (both nights). For an exact schedule of entertainment and events, view the website at [www.cedarlakesummerfest.com](http://www.cedarlakesummerfest.com).

### **Downtown Princeton Indiana Freedom Festival**

DPI Freedom Festival begins 2 p.m. July 4. Fireworks at sundown at the Princeton Fairgrounds. There is paid parking nearby.





## Freedom Celebrations across Indiana!

### **Fireworks on the Ohio - Evansville's Fireworks Celebration**

Evansville's largest public fireworks celebration, Fireworks on the Ohio, is planning a grand return in 2021! Located along Riverside Drive in Downtown Evansville, this event is FREE to attend, thanks to generous corporate sponsors. Event date and time is 6 p.m. food trucks and activities, then 9:15 p.m. is fireworks! The fireworks show is 100% underwritten by corporate sponsors. The event is organized by the DOWNTOWN EVANSVILLE - Economic Improvement District.

### **Independence Day Fireworks Spectacular at Hummel Drive-In!**

Hummel Drive-In Theatre presents their annual Independence Day Fireworks Spectacular 10 p.m. July 2 at 2870 E. State Road 32 in Winchester.

### **Owen County Fireworks presented by the Owen County Chamber of Commerce**

We are excited to announce that Owen County will be hosting the 2021 Firework Show at 9:30 p.m. July 3. Fireworks are visible from any of the following designated parking areas: IHC Spencer, IU Health-Spencer, Owen County YMCA, Owen Valley Health campus, Owen Valley High School, Owen Valley Sports Complex, Save-A-Lot. A huge thanks to the Sponsor of this event: Boston Scientific!!!

### **71st Annual Madison Regatta July 2-4/Roostertail Music Festival July 2 to 3**

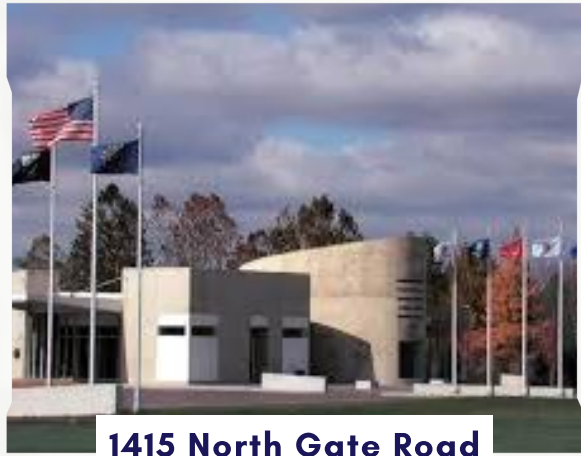
Indiana's premier independent country music and rock festival, 4th of July weekend during the Madison Regatta! Two nights of music and two days of the world's fastest boat race for America's oldest trophy. Fireworks, Camping, REAL MUSIC from the biggest names in entertainment! Madison Regatta Race Schedule TBA: Tickets On Sale Now at [www.madisonregatta.com/music/](http://www.madisonregatta.com/music/) & <https://www.madisonregatta.com/races/>. Event at Bicentennial Park in Madison.

This year's general admission ticket will gain admittance in both the Madison Regatta and Roostertail Music Festival. General admission tickets beginning June 27 are \$50 and will only be available at selected locations and/or the gate.

### **CSLOA July Fireworks Show**

Join us for a day of food, music and fun at Sweetwater Beach in Nineveh. We will begin serving food at 3 p.m. followed by the fireworks at 10 p.m. July 10. For more, visit <http://cordrysweetwater.org/?p=1257>.

# ROLL CALL!



**1415 North Gate Road  
Madison, IN 47250**

The Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery is open for visitors. Please follow all COVID-19 guidelines:

- Wear a mask in all buildings.
- Maintain 6 feet social space.

We understand and appreciate your contribution to keeping everyone safe to enjoy their visit.

Click [HERE](#) to see the webpage.



## Indiana Veterans Home



Winner! Henry " Dog" M.  
Bass 3.15lbs



Danny G.  
Bass 2.76lbs



Bill P.  
Bass 2.5lbs

INDIANA VETERANS HOME 125TH ANNIVERSARY

*Legion Pond Fishing Competition 2021*



# LA PORTE STAND DOWN: La Porte County Fairgrounds

August 20 4 to 7 p.m. CST

2581 IN-2, La Porte, Indiana 46350

Seeking employers to attend!

To get involved contact Jill Powers at [jpowers@goodwill-ni.org](mailto:jpowers@goodwill-ni.org) or 574-400-5487

## Job Fair at the Indiana Veterans Center 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. July 22



MEET YOUR

### DISABLED VETERANS OUTREACH SPECIALIST

Darrell Johnson

317.232.3910

[DarJohnson@dwd.in.gov](mailto:DarJohnson@dwd.in.gov)



*If you are an employer, a veteran seeking employment or a veteran interested in entrepreneurship & small business, visit the Veteran Employment page on our website at <https://www.in.gov/dva/about-idva/employment/>.*